Problems of Haj Pilgrims

3299. SHRIMATI BRINDA KARAT: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has received any complaint from the State Government of West Bengal regarding the problems being faced by their Haj Pilgrims; and

(b) the steps taken by his Ministry to redress their grievances?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) No.

(b) Not applicable.

Effect of Hyde Act on nuclear deal

†3300. SHRI LALIT KISHORE CHATURVEDI: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is in a position to state that the Hyde Act would not be effective over Indo-US nuclear deal;

(b) whether the American side means that the deal does not come under the purview of Hyde Act;

(c) whether by blaming the violation of deal on the pretext of inspection America itself and its allies may stop supply of nuclear fuel and may withdraw the technology and establishment; and

(d) whether the stabilization of price of Uranium has been ensured?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) to (c) The Hyde Act, is enabling legislation passed by the US Congress and signed into law by President Bush on December 18, 2006 as part of its commitment under the 18 July 2005 Joint Statement, to amend its laws to enable the US Government to enter into full civil nuclear cooperation with India. Following the passage of the Hyde Act, India was exempted from the requirements of Section 123(a)(2) of the US Atomic Energy Act, 1954 that requires full-scope safeguards as a condition for civil nuclear cooperation with US. The Hyde Act is domestic legislation of the United States. India's rights and obligation regarding civil nuclear cooperation with the US arise only from the 123 Agreement that we have agreed upon with the US. The 123 Agreement has incorporated fuel supply assurances as well as a multi-layer consultation process to guard against any disruption of fuel supply.

(d) The price of Uranium, like any other commodity, depends upon global supply and demand.

Indians travelling with false documents

3301. DR. ABHISHEK MANU SINGHVI:
SHRI VIJAY J. DARDA:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of Indian citizens reported to have been arrested in foreign countries for travelling with false documents, during 2005 and 2006;

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(b) whether there is any mechanism to cross check the reported arrests with the families of such persons;

(c) whether any special drive has been launched to meet the twin objective of getting such Indians back to India and simultaneously ensuring that prospectively such a situation is avoided; and

(d) whether co-operation of NGOs has been sought in this direction?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) The information is being collected and will be placed on the Table of the House at the earliest possible.

(b) As soon as arrest of a person, believed to be an Indian national, is reported to the concerned Indian Mission abroad, the Mission takes steps to establish his Indian nationality by verifying the particulars on the Passport Information Services on Net (PISON). Cases, in which identity cannot be established in the above manner, are referred to the concerned State Governments in India for verification. The process of verification involves, *inter alia,* cross-checking with the concerned families.

(c) and (d) The Mission seek consular access upon being informed of the detention of an Indian national. They also render necessary assistance, as required, by interacting with the concerned families in India, requesting for speedy trials, providing advice/guidance in legal and other matters, ensuring fair and humane treatment in foreign jails, seeking remission of sentence and facilitating repatriation to India on their eventual release. Special drives have been mounted by Indian Missions to issue travel documents during periods of Amnesty, for illegal migrants, declared by some countries in Europe and the Gulf region.

Information on steps being taken within the country to prevent illegal migration, including through co-operation of NGOs, is being collected from the concerned Ministries/Departments and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Depiction of Hindu Gods

3302. SHRIMATI HEMA MALINI: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is aware that the June'07 issue of popular US magazine depicted Hindu God Ganesha holding an alcoholic beverage in each hand and Hanuman in obscure pose which caused ire of many Hindus in the country;

(b) if so, whether Government is taking any corrective measures; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) to (c) Government are aware that a US magazine "Stuff", published by Dennis Publishing Limited, featured, in its June 2007 edition, images of Hindu Gods that were offensive. Our Consulate in New York was directed to take up the issue with the publishers and have informed us that the magazine had reportedly gone out of circulation.